

NOROC NEWS NOVEMBER 2006

Publication of NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children), Inc., Abilene, Texas
Editor: Carol Schempp (You are encouraged to reproduce and distribute this newsletter.)

From Mary's Desk by Mary Ferris, Mission Co-Worker in Tulcea, Romania

Dear Friends,

This last month has been a real test of our endurance. Petru and I both have been hobbling around, me with my leg and Petru with a slipped disc. I am almost all better and Petru, despite being in considerable pain, is going to Bucuresti soon to receive an award for one of his photos. This is a real honor as the contest is sponsored by the United Nations.

The most traumatic thing this month was the accident of Mihai Braileanu. Mihai is our caretaker at Casa Noastra. He fell 20 feet from the roof he was working on, cracked vertebrae number 3, and gashed open his head. Miraculously, he has no permanent injuries. He still has a cast around his neck and will be sore for a long time, but basically he will be fine. He had a legion of angels around him to cushion his fall.

Another trauma and drama was the firing of the director at the children's home, Speranta. One day I was in his office planning the computer lab we are setting up with the computers do-

nated by the Danish, and the next day he was fired. In his place is a wonderful lady who has been a teacher for years and really loves children. She is insisting that they be kept busy all the time. The change in atmosphere is dramatic. Let us pray she stays more than six months. She is a warm, loving, but tough person who has opened the doors for NOROC in ways that never have happened before. She is insisting that the children go to church on Sundays and is having an official children's blessing by the priests in charge of Speranta. She wants to have a new beginning for everyone. Another foundation has donated Bibles for everyone in the center, including staff, and special picture Bibles for the younger children. We can now have Bible Study sessions whenever we want. All this seems too good to be true. Let us pray it is a permanent change.

For NOROC, October has been the month for outdoor excursions with all the children. October in Romania is absolutely gorgeous so traditionally

NOROC has tried to take the children out on excursions during this month. Instead of one large trip we took the children to special places in small groups. We took two groups of the older children fishing. What a magical time! The first group caught over 100 little fish. In Romania every catch, no matter how small, is a keeper. We built a campfire and grilled the fish over the campfire. While we were sitting around the camp fire we told stories from the Bible about Jesus going fishing. We concluded our story telling with the scene from the end of Luke where Jesus prepares a fish breakfast for the disciples. In this scene Jesus asks Peter (and us) do you love me? "If you love me, feed my sheep." Jesus says this three times. Sitting around a campfire and eating the grilled fish we had just caught ourselves, the children were eager to see the connection of this story to their own lives. The second group of children did not catch as many fish, but just being out on the Delta in row boats was a complete thrill

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SEEDS OF HOPE

NOROC has embarked on a fund raising program for the future. The Seeds of Hope campaign has a two-fold focus: support for the PCUSA missionary position (approximately \$34,000/ year) and support for the ongoing work of NOROC (annual budget of approximately \$130,000/ year). We have many generous supporters from across the US, and we depend on all of them. Consider a special year-end gift or start the new year with a gift which will make a real difference in the lives of some of the most neglected people in modern society. All gifts are tax deductible.



ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIVING

What do you give someone who has everything? Why not share your giving with those who have little or nothing. Check out the NOROC Christmas Wish List. \$10 can send a child to camp for a day, \$5 can buy a Bible. \$35 pays a granny for one month. \$5 pays for a dental check up. What better way to honor a friend or loved one?

Each year NOROC gives Christmas gifts to approximately 200 children in Tulcea County. For many of them this is the only gift they receive. \$5 provides that gift. Your gifts can make that happen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern:

- Mihai's continued recovery.
- Good health for everyone.
- Continuation of good relations with the children's home.
- The support through prayers and donations that NOROC receives.

From Mary's Desk

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for them. This second group received an additional story about Jesus because we had a small squall blow over us and we were able to tell them about Jesus calming the waters. If all this sounds dangerous, it isn't. The camp we went to is fully equipped with life jackets for every person, fully trained instructors, and big sturdy boats. Plus, the water was only about 2 feet deep in most places.

The middle schoolers went to Galati to an exhibit of bird's nests and eggs. An ornithologist from Romania had collected over his lifetime the world's greatest collection of bird's nests and eggs. After his death, his family donated half the collection to the nature museum in Galati. They put together a spectacular exhibit, including a photo exhibition of birds and their habitat from the Danube Delta. One of the two main photographers was Dan Bandanceau from Tulcea. Dan is Petru's best friend and owns the photo shop where we get our photos. We also went to a planetarium which was a first for these children.

The last excursion was with the younger children to the Cocos Monastery to see the Holy Bones of four martyrs from the 3rd century. The monastery is in a beautiful setting and the priests were really very loving with the children. However, our outdoor

excursion was cut short by a frigid wind. We decided to take the children back to Tulcea for hot chocolate with whipped cream on top. We went to our usual restaurant, but it was so smoky inside we could not stand it. Given the weather outside and the need to kill about an hour and a half before we were scheduled to return the children, we spontaneously decided to go to the very elegant upstairs restaurant over the pizza parlor where we originally had intended to go. Five adults and our brood of 16 children filed up the marble stairs into this restaurant. The waitresses were very gracious, never batted an eye, and proceeded to seat us as if we were royalty. We were the only ones there and they formally seated us all at their elegant tables, complete with white linen and china. The china was whisked away from curious fingers and I had visions of chocolate spilled all over these beautiful linens, but no one spilled even a single drop. This turned out to be a beautiful experience for them. They had never had hot chocolate before, much less ever having been in such an elegant, quiet place. They were so fascinated. There was soft classical music playing in the background. I whispered that we had to listen to the music as we sipped our hot chocolate. It was an hour of serene peace, and the children were

far from bored. There were real oil paintings on the walls and a marble bathroom, complete with a motion activated hand dryer. There was a lot to see and do in one hour. All these were absolutely new experiences for these young children. The waitresses were marvelous with them. They were perfect children, until we got back to the children's home and one child decided to throw his obligatory temper tantrum inside the front hall, in front of the new director screaming, "Doamna Mary took away my Holy Water. She took my Hoooooooly Waaaaaaater".repeating this over and over. He was right; I had taken away his bottle of Holy Water. The priest at the monastery had given us a large, special bottle of Holy Water for the center and somehow this had fallen into Cornell's mischievous little hands. He was playing with it, trying to drink it all and getting ready to baptize a dog with what was left so I instinctively snatched it from his hands. In retrospect, I should have engineered this scene differently but the fake screaming for the new director was really funny. She did the right thing by ignoring him, and he soon was off to his next prank.

Continue to pray for us all and for the continued blessings we are receiving.

Peace and Love, Mary Ferris

For everything there is a season...

In October the children's home in Babadag, another town in Tulcea County that NOROC's ministry has reached, was permanently closed. It was a sad time for the children who were living there and who would once again be transferred to a different center. It was also a sad time for the eleven grannies (pictured at left with Petru Solca) who have worked for NOROC for many years. Petru and Marilena Solca spent an afternoon with the grannies on behalf of NOROC, expressing their appreciation for their hard work and devotion to the children. The comments of two grannies were especially meaningful.

Granny Paraschiva Dobre: "...NOROC meant a lot more to me (than money.) I came here to meet the other grannies and help the kids grow up with God in their hearts. I may meet some of these kids in the future or I may never meet them. But I know we, these grannies, have had our part in these kids' education."

Granny Constantina Taslitchi: "I have worked for NOROC for 9 years. I had hard moments, sometimes, with the kids from the Sera wing (handicapped children). But the other moments, the pleasant ones, were more and they will stay forever

in my mind. What would I have done without NOROC? I have no pension and my husband died 10 years ago."

We give thanks for our grannies.



If you wish to make a tax deductible donation to NOROC, please mail it to: NOROC, INC, 200 Hedges, Abilene, TX